

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
BUREAU OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS AND PLANNING
STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND ADVISORY SERVICES UNIT

HOW DO I BECOME A REHS?

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Registration As An Environmental Health Specialist

1. What duties does a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) perform?

A REHS works to improve the quality of life and health through environmental education, consultation, and protection. Although a majority of REHS's work for government, many are also employed by the private sector. Some typical program responsibilities include food protection, land use, recreational swimming areas, onsite septic systems, drinking water quality, housing, vector control, disaster sanitation, and solid, liquid, and hazardous materials management.

Typical duties of a REHS in local government include inspections of various facilities such as food establishments, public swimming pools, community drinking water systems, landfills, and underground storage tanks in order to determine compliance with federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, and ordinances. For further information contact the California Environmental Health Association (CEHA) at www.ceha.org, the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health at www.ccdeh.com, or universities with approved Environmental Health curriculums listed on the California Department of Public Health web page at www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/occupations/Pages/REHS.aspx.

2. What are the minimum requirements to become a REHS?

A bachelor's degree is required with a minimum of 30 semester units of approved basic science courses including approved coursework in biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry or physics, microbiology, and college algebra (third year) or pre-calculus.

3. What are basic science courses?

Basic science courses are normally the foundation college courses required for a degree in biology. These should not be confused with general education courses that cannot be counted as they are for non-science majors. A basic science course must be acceptable for degree in biological science. Courses designed for liberal arts, general education, or non-science degrees are not acceptable.

4. Where can I get further information regarding the EHS Registration Program?

You may visit the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program web page at www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/occupations/Pages/REHS.aspx. In addition, you may contact Margaret Blood, Program Administrator, Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program, MS 7404, P.O. Box 997377, Sacramento, CA 95899-7377 or telephone (916) 552-9991.

5. Where can I get a listing of the basic requirements of the program?

On the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program web page at www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/occupations/Pages/REHS.aspx. Click on the link titled: "Health and Safety Code, Division 104, Part 1, Chapter 4, Article 1." This will list the education, training, and experience requirements for the five different options.

6. Which universities have approved Environmental Health degree programs that meet the requirements of Option V of Section 106635?

Universities offering approved programs for both the bachelor's and master's degrees are:

- California State University, Northridge
- California State University, Fresno

Universities offering only an approved master's degree are:

- University of California, Los Angeles
- Loma Linda University

University offering only an approved bachelor's degree is:

- California State University, San Bernadino

Please confirm with a school counselor for the approved program option. For further information visit the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program web page. Click "Universities Offering Approved Environmental Health Curriculum."

7. I graduated from a college in a country other than the United States. How can I receive credit for the coursework I have completed?

All candidates with foreign transcripts must be evaluated for course equivalency by a commercial credential evaluation service of their choice. A listing of foreign transcript services may be obtained through the County of Los Angeles, Environmental Health, Staff Development and Advisory Services Unit, or on the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program web page at:

www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/occupations/Pages/REHS.aspx.

8. How do I apply for registration as an Environmental Health Specialist?

You may contact Margaret Blood, Program Administrator at (916) 552-9991 and leave your name and address. An application form and other pertinent information will be mailed to you. You may also receive an Employment Packet from the County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health, Environmental Health, web page at www.lapublichealth.org/eh.

9. How long does the evaluation process take?

An evaluation letter will be mailed to you by the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program approximately four weeks after receipt of all required documentation. The letter will specify whether you are eligible to become an Environmental Health Specialist trainee, and may list additional requirements necessary to complete.

10. Where can I complete the training and experience requirements?

Local California environmental health agencies have state approved Environmental Health Specialist trainee programs. The typical way to satisfy the training and experience requirements is to work for a local environmental health agency. The specific training plan requirements can be found on the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program web page under "Elements of a Training Plan." You may also want to talk to your local environmental health agency training officer.

11. How do I prepare for the registration examination?

The prescribed training and experience requirements are designed to help you with the Examination. A list of reference materials is available which lists sources that describe content areas from your local environmental health training officer, or on the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program web page at: www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/occupations/Pages/REHS.aspx.

In addition, there are "REHS Examination Preparation Courses" available. Please consult your local environmental health training officer for a listing of current course availability.

12. When will I be eligible to take the Examination to become a Registered Environmental Health Specialist?

After you have completed the necessary education, training, and experience requirements specified for your option, you will be eligible to take the Examination. The Examination is given three times per year, usually in March, July, and November in both Sacramento and the Los Angeles area.

13. When will I receive the results of the Examination?

You will receive a notice from the Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Specialist Registration Program in the mail approximately six weeks after the Examination indicating whether you passed or failed. Percentage scores are not released.

14. Must I report a change of address?

Yes, please send your written request for change of address to the Department of Public Health at the address listed below. Otherwise, the Department of Public Health will not be able to contact you regarding the status of your application or your registration. It is your responsibility to notify the Department of any address change.

15. What is the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee (EHSRC)?

The EHSRC was created in the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Act, Health and Safety Code, Section 106675. The members are appointed by the governor to advise and make recommendations to the program. A list of the committee members is provided on the Department of Public Health web page.

For Further Information, you may contact:

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